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The situation in Afghanistan

Crime prevention and criminal justice

International drug control

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 21 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation dated 6 May 2009 concerning the growing threat to international security posed by the spread of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17, 97, 98 and 99, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 21 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the State Duma on the growing threat to international security posed by the spread of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan

In 1998, a Political Declaration and the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development were adopted at the twentieth special session of the United Nations General Assembly. The decade that has passed since then has shown the legitimacy of the goals established and the urgency of achieving them.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, while supporting and commending the joint efforts by States around the world and the work of international organizations and civil society to destroy or significantly reduce illicit drug crops, must state with regret that the international community has not fully achieved the objectives that were set at the twentieth special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

While consistently emphasizing the urgency of achieving those objectives, the State Duma urges the international community to conduct an objective assessment of the results obtained and the strategies used.

The Deputies of the State Duma note with concern the continuing growth in the opium poppy cultivation area and expansion of opium production in Afghanistan. The statistics of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime show that Afghanistan's opium production increased 42 times from 2001 to 2008, reaching 7,700 tons, which means the country has a global monopoly on opiate production.

A careful study of the situation in Afghanistan leads to the conclusion that most of the opium production takes place in the south of the country. The continuing military confrontation in Afghanistan and the lack of security are hindering agricultural production and encouraging the production of narcotic drugs, while income from drug sales is the main source of financing for terrorist and extremist activity.

The optimistic conclusion that the "opium-free" northern provinces of Afghanistan are an example for the other provinces is contradicted by the fact that the same provinces now have record harvests of another drug crop, cannabis, which is used to obtain marijuana (Afghanistan being one of the world's leading producers). Furthermore, most of the best equipped laboratories for making heroin from the opium harvested in the south of the country are located precisely in the northern provinces, which are close to the borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

If the current methods of countering the threat of the spread of narcotic drugs from Afghanistan continue to be used, it could take many years to reach a definitive solution to the problem.

The State Duma reiterates that countering the growing threat of the spread of drugs from Afghanistan is a common task of the international community, a task

which requires coordinated action at the international level. The State Duma recalls that the United Nations Security Council has repeatedly recognized that illicit opium poppy cultivation and the illicit opium trade are a threat to peace, stability and socio-economic reconstruction in Afghanistan, as well as to the security of the region and other regions of the world.

In the context of the long-standing global and regional problems and threats in Afghanistan, interested States, especially those most seriously affected by Afghan drug trafficking, are entitled to raise the issue of how to enhance the effectiveness of the drug control efforts of States which participate in securing peace and the rule of law in the territory of Afghanistan.

The widespread use of drugs produced in Afghanistan causes serious harm to the individual, the family and society both in Afghanistan and in other States, including the Russian Federation.

In view of the above, the State Duma considers that:

1. All interested States, especially Afghanistan and the States participating in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, should step up their efforts to counteract the spread of drugs from Afghanistan, as they constitute a direct and real threat to security in the region and the world;

2. United Nations Member States should conduct a serious analysis of the situation in Afghanistan and its development in the region and take immediate measures to improve mechanisms for preventing the spread of drugs from Afghanistan;

3. The parameters for international assistance in the field of combating drugs should be improved, and it is suggested that action be taken to develop clear time-based and quantitative indicators of its effectiveness and also to create an assistance programme that is coordinated at various levels on the basis of a single road map to counter drug production in Afghanistan. The programme should be tailored to various regions, donors and recipients;

4. The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan should take a more active and decisive role in destroying illicit drug crops and disrupting drug production and distribution activity;

5. The results of the Special Conference on Afghanistan which took place in March 2009 in Moscow, under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the positive outcome of The Hague International Conference on Afghanistan which also took place in March 2009, play an important role in promoting regional cooperation with a view to stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. It would be advisable for all interested States and international organizations to take part in the specific activities envisaged under the Plan of Action of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which are based on the outcome of the Special Conference on Afghanistan held under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization;

6. It is essential to establish cooperation through the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, especially in the area of combating drugs, with a view to combining the drug control efforts undertaken within Afghanistan and along its borders;

7. All interested States and international organizations should take part in the complex preventive operation Kanal, which is being successfully carried out by the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and support the effort to establish drug control and financial security belts along the borders of Afghanistan.

Moscow
6 May 2009